



THE SENATE SPOTLIGHT

Volume 2, Issue 2

Georgia State Senate

February 2006

In Memory of Secretary of the Senate Frank Eldridge



Longtime Secretary of the Georgia Senate Frank Eldridge, Jr., passed away on the morning of Saturday, February 4, 2006, of an apparent heart attack. He was 73 years old.

Governor Sonny Perdue ordered flags on the State Capitol building and grounds be flown at half-staff in memory of Mr. Eldridge on Monday, February 6, the day of his funeral.

A former state Senator from Waycross, Mr. Eldridge served as the Senate's administrative officer and unofficial parliamentarian for nearly 14 legislative sessions. He was initially hired under former Lt. Governor Pierre Howard and retained his position under Lt. Governor Mark Taylor and Senate President Pro Tempore Eric Johnson.

"Frank Eldridge was the true definition of a public servant. He dedicated his life to the people of Georgia by serving on the Public Service Commission, the state Senate and was elected by his peers to serve as the Secretary of the Senate," Sen. Johnson said.

"Every morning he arrived early at the State Capitol in his old red pick-up truck, ready to do what was best for the members of the state Senate. He was a loyal friend who loved to share stories of the old days in the General Assembly and was wise beyond his years on the way the Senate should run. He loved to fly his plane and now, he has started a new flight, one with his Lord. His wife and family are in my prayers. Frank will be missed and the state Senate will never be the same."

Mr. Eldridge served as a state Senator from 1965 until 1982, when, he often said, he left elective office due to illness. "The voters were sick of me," he would joke. It always brought a laugh from whoever was in earshot.



A hardware store owner and banker by trade, he also served as executive director of the Georgia Public Service Commission in the late 1980s and early 1990s, prior to being hired by the Senate in 1993.

In Memory...Secretary of the Senate Frank Eldridge



“Frank Eldridge devoted a lifetime of service to the people of Georgia,” said Governor Sonny Perdue. “He was a true servant leader, who earned the respect and admiration of his peers and the public he served with such dedication for over 40 years. I considered him a trusted friend and often sought his wise counsel when I served in the Georgia Senate and as Governor. Mary and I treasured his friendship, and we offer our deepest condolences and heartfelt prayers for his family.”

Nearly every state Senator and many former Senators traveled to Waycross on Monday, February 6, to pay their final respects to a man who served the Georgia Senate in many ways. On Monday, February 13, the Senate held a special memorial service to honor the life of Sec. Eldridge.

Honoring Former Sen. Rene' Kemp



Former state Sen. Rene Kemp died Saturday, February 4, 2006, at St. Joseph's/Candler Hospital in Savannah, following a long battle with prostate cancer. He was 70.

A native of Swainsboro, Sen. Kemp served in the state Senate from 1993 until he retired in 2004. He also served in the Georgia House of Representatives from 1977 until 1982.

A Democrat, Sen. Kemp once chaired the influential Senate Judiciary Committee, and was named chairman of the Senate Special Judiciary Committee after the Republicans captured the Senate in 2003, giving credence to his vast knowledge of Georgia law and his sharp legal mind.

Sen. Kemp was laid to rest in Hinesville on Saturday, February 11.

Senate Budget's Spotlight on...Monthly Numbers



The revenue collected by the Department of Revenue for the month of January 2006 (FY06) was \$1.79 billion. This is an increase of 15.5 percent when compared to the revenue collected in January 2005 (\$1.55 billion).

This is an increase of \$240,674,000. The percentage increase year-to-date for FY06 compared to FY05 is 9.5 percent.

Spotlight on... Senate Doorkeepers

You see them in the hallways...you say hello to them every day during the legislative session. They are the Senate Doorkeepers. These hard-working men and women assist the Georgia Senate by maintaining the order, decorum and security of the Senate Chamber on a daily basis. They are just a few of the “unsung heroes” of the Senate, and some of them have been here for more than a decade. Let’s take a closer look at these special folks and find out some of the more interesting details about their lives.



“Coach” Matthew Hill, Sergeant-at-Arms

Matthew Hill serves as Sergeant-at-Arms for the state Senate, and he is affectionately referred to as “Coach” by Senators and colleagues alike because of his many years as a coach of high school football, basketball and track in Cartersville. Coach Hill has been with the Senate since 1991, and he has served during the tenures of Lt. Governors Pierre Howard and Mark Taylor. Coach Hill is retired nowadays, but he still spends time serving on the Cartersville Board of Education and as the recreation director of a local children’s center. He has also served previously as a church minister, and he

greatly enjoys fishing Lake Allatoona and Glass Lake.

Lorenzo Wallace, Senate Doorkeeper

Lorenzo was born and raised in Atlanta, and he’s been a Senate Doorkeeper for 18 legislative sessions. Lorenzo began his tenure with the Senate during Zell Miller’s years as our Lt. Governor. He is a civil service retiree who spent 31 years with the U.S. Postal Service. During the interim, Lorenzo enjoys working with his church, Warren Memorial United Methodist, which his grandfather helped found. Lorenzo also likes to fish when he gets the chance.



Carl Johnson, Senate Doorkeeper

Carl’s face is also familiar to everyone at the state Senate, because he has been a doorkeeper here for nine years. Carl is a Hinesville native, and a former member of the U.S. National Guard. He also worked in the private sector prior to his retirement. He enjoys fishing and especially likes to go crabbing. Carl owns property in Liberty County, where he goes to fish and crab whenever he gets the chance.

Louis Rivers, Senate Doorkeeper

Louis is an Atlanta native who has been with the state Senate for seven years now. He spent 41 years working for Emory University as manager of building services. Louis is a graduate of Morris Brown College, and he’s been married for 61 years. He enjoys golfing and fishing whenever he gets the opportunity.



Spotlight on... Senate Doorkeepers, cont'd



Dorothy Thompson, Senate Doorkeeper

Dorothy was born in Thomaston, and she now resides in Atlanta. She has been a Senate Doorkeeper for four years and is now retired. Dorothy previously worked at Fort Dylan, and she now enjoys working with the Golden-H Club as much as possible. She also loves vacationing with her fellow Golden-H Club members, as they frequently travel throughout the State to go apple picking and peach picking. Dorothy has five children.

Wade Morris, Senate Doorkeeper

Wade is from Cartersville, and this is his third session with the Senate. He has officially retired from the private sector, where he worked in manufacturing for many years. Wade is a part-time radio/TV technician, and he truly enjoys rebuilding and repairing radios and televisions. He also likes working with computers, and he goes fishing whenever possible.



Don Butler, Senate Doorkeeper

Don is originally from Takoma Park, MD, but he has lived in and around the Atlanta area for 37 years. This is his second session with the Senate. Don is a retired computer programmer, who spent his career with private companies such as Norfolk Southern Railway, Ogelthorpe Power Company and others. Don was also a member of the Georgia House of Representatives in the 1970s, representing south DeKalb County. He is an active member of his church, First Baptist of Lawrenceville.



John W. Long, Senate Doorkeeper

John lives in Decatur and was invited by former Lt. Governor Pierre Howard to be a Senate Doorkeeper. He has retired from a career with different public agencies such as the Tennessee Valley Authority and the General Services Administration. John graduated from the University of Georgia in 1960.



Spotlight on... Senate Doorkeepers, cont'd



James Austin, Senate Doorkeeper

James is an Atlanta native who has been with the state Senate for six years. He has retired from Georgia State University, where he spent 30 years working in the Office of Student Affairs. James now spends his free time working with the community through his church and in neighborhood planning. James enjoys hobbies such as reading and taking in plays at Atlanta's theaters.

Bob White, Senate Doorkeeper

Bob is a Savannah native, who now lives near Lake Oconee in Greene County. He is semi-retired from different areas of the private sector such as trucking, and he was once a small business owner. Bob is a golf enthusiast and a big UGA fan, and he takes in Georgia baseball and basketball games as often as possible. He also enjoys boating near his home at Lake Oconee.



Eunice Mixon, Senate Doorkeeper

Eunice came to the Senate as a widower in 1999. She hails from Tifton, where she lives on a farm that she says was "full of life for many, many years." Eunice has retired from a 30-year career as a teacher in Tift County. Nowadays, she spends her free time attending church and going to her neighborhood beauty shop. Eunice says that she returns to the Capitol each year because otherwise she "wouldn't have the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people on a daily basis."

Janetta Johnson, Senate Doorkeeper

Janetta lives in Lawrenceville and this is her first session with the Senate. Prior to becoming a doorkeeper, she worked for 15 years as a bailiff with the Gwinnett County Superior Court. Janetta has retired from a career with the Georgia Department of Human Resources that spanned 30 years. She is the author of a fiction novel and two works of non-fiction, as she greatly enjoys reading and writing. Janetta also likes gardening, and she has two sons and five grandchildren.



Employee Spotlight on... Amanda Seals



What is your current job and/or assignments?

I serve as the chief of staff in the Office of the President Pro Tempore. I have worked for Sen. Eric Johnson since 2002 when he was the Minority Leader. I am more or less the conduit for information for and advisor to the President Pro Tempore, and I serve the Senate on his behalf. My main responsibility is to assist the Pro Tem with all of his communications with the media and to the general public. Most of my duties are what I term, "other duties as assigned." If there is something the Senator needs to accomplish, I am there to help get the job done.

How did you end up at the General Assembly?

In 1998, I was the Director of the Senate Information Office, and first got to know Sen. Eric Johnson. After moving on to work for the Department of Education as Communications Director, I maintained working relationships with many of the Senators, including Sen. Johnson. I happened to run into him on the last day of the 2002 legislative session, and he informed me that there was going to be an opening in his office and asked if I was interested. I was looking to move on at that point, and the timing was perfect. I am convinced that God was looking after me that day.

Tell me a little about your background. Birthplace, brothers and sisters, etc.

I was born and raised in Marietta, and I still live there. I was raised by my mother, my grandmother and my aunt. I am a third-generation graduate of Marietta High School, and I received my AA in journalism from Young Harris College in 1994. I was a recipient of the Georgia Press Association Scholarship, and I attended the University of Georgia for a year. The death of my cousin, who was like my sister, brought me home from Athens. I then finished up my degree in Media Communications at Kennesaw State University, and I have worked in and around the media since 1996.

Tell us some of your fondest memories of working with the General Assembly.

I would have to say that my favorite memories of working with the Senate were in the fall of 2002. Governor Perdue won the election and the Senate majority changed also. So, my boss went from Minority Leader to President Pro Tem. This was history in the making for the state of Georgia, and to have been a part of that is a real "pinch me moment". I have known some of the Senators who were in the minority party for so long; it was a great day to see them finally get a chance to work on some of the issues that are of importance to them.

Tell us about your hobbies and/or what you enjoy doing away from work...

I enjoy catching up with my husband Paul on the weekends. He is very understanding during the session, so I dedicate my time to him on the weekends. Our furry children are a black lab and three cats (all rescued), so I enjoy spending time with my family most of all. I am also a volunteer at Good Mews animal rescue shelter. Helping stray, abandoned and abused animals is one of my passions. I also like wedding coordination, which is something I do on occasion, especially to help out friends.

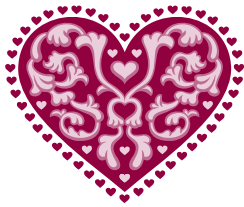
The General Assembly can be an exciting place to work. What are some of the aspects of your position that you enjoy the most?

I love meeting and working with all of the different people who come to the Capitol each day. The General Assembly is a microcosm that is made up of so many different types of people from all over the State. The best part of my job is getting to know people with different backgrounds, and becoming friends with them despite any philosophical differences we may have.



IT'S OFFICIAL!!! As you may have noticed recently, the sign outside the Legislative Office Building has changed. The new sign was unveiled during an official dedication ceremony on Thursday, January 26. Governor Perdue, President Pro Tempore Eric Johnson and House Speaker Glenn Richardson all spoke in memory of former U.S. Senator Paul Coverdell, who passed away in 2000. Nancy Coverdell attended the ceremony, and helped to unveil the new sign. The building you have known as the LOB for many years will now be known as the COB in honor of Sen. Paul Coverdell.

Senate Spotlight on . . . February Birthdays



HAPPY BIRTHDAY to . . .



Senator Seth Harp
Neerja Tayal- Budget Office
Beverly Crumley- Senate Secretary
Mary Whiting- Senate Secretary
Marcia Wallace- Senate Secretary
Leah Tatum-Dick- Senate Secretary
Jeffrey Foley- Secretary of the Senate's Office
Terry Long- Legislative Counsel
Sharon Wilder- Senate Secretary

February 26th
February 5th
February 10th
February 10th
February 17th
February 18th
February 20th
February 20th
February 24th



Happy Valentine's Day!

The Senate Information Office would like to take this opportunity to wish all Senators and Senate staff a Happy Valentine's Day!

The Senate Spotlight is a product of the Senate Information Office. If you have a suggestion, a person you would like to nominate for the Employee Spotlight or would like to contribute a Senate-related article, please contact us at 404.656.0028.